

THYMIC HORMONES. Edited by JF Bach. Clinics in Immunology and Allergy, Vol 3, No 1. (Pp viii + 203. Illustrated. £11.75). London: Saunders, 1983.

WHEN the importance of the thymus to immunological development was discovered in the early 1960's it was appreciated that certain thymic functions may be mediated by humoral factors or hormones. A number of different peptides have been extracted from thymic tissue and there is a large, often controversial, literature dealing with their effects and possible role in T-lymphocyte development. Modern techniques of molecular biology have provided pure preparations of some of the putative hormones and in several cases they have been both sequenced and synthesised. Such developments should help to clarify the role of these factors and a set of review articles on the present "state-of-the-art" could be considered to be timely.

Following a brief fatherly introduction by RA Good there is a rather lengthy but critical analysis by Stutman of the possible roles for thymic hormones in T cell differentiation. An important aspect of this review is the attention paid to difficulties of interpretation which result from the choice of system for hormone assay. Clearly a fundamental problem in this field remains — how do we decide whether or not a particular thymic hormone assay is relevant to the physiological role of that hormone?

The next chapter deals with the relationship between FTS (facteur thymique serique, recently renamed thymulin) and T cell activation, in particular the growth of interleukin-2 producing T cells. Then follows a chapter on the effects of various thymic hormones on human lymphocytes *in vitro*, a chapter on the structure and biology of the thymosin peptides and a chapter dealing with similar aspects of thymulin. The book concludes with a chapter on the evaluation of some thymic hormone levels in serum with respect to age and diseases and two chapters on therapeutic adventures with thymic hormones mainly in various immunodeficiency states.

Some parts of the book will be of interest to students of immunology. For those with a more general interest in the subject there is an unfortunate imbalance in that some hormones are dealt with in considerable detail whereas others such as Thymic Humoral Factor and Thymopoietins are treated in a very sketchy manner. The clinician looking for guidance in the therapeutic use of thymic hormones will be disappointed.

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SURGERY OF THE ANUS, RECTUM AND COLON. By John Goligher. Fifth Edition. (Pp 1,186. Illustrated. £49.50). London: Baillière Tindall, 1984.

IT is just four years since the fourth edition of this classic was enthusiastically welcomed in these columns. This new edition is, remarkably, even better. Many of the illustrations have been redrawn and the reproduction of others is much improved; in the previous edition some were rather dark. There are 150 completely new illustrations.

In addition to considerable rearrangement there is a great deal of new material and there are now 5 new chapters, and 1,000 new references, many as late as mid 1983. The whole book has expanded by some 20 per cent to 1,161 pages. Topical subjects like mucosal proctectomy, ileo-anal anastomosis and banding of piles are promoted from Appendices to expanded versions in the full text, and new concepts such as solitary rectal ulcer and infra-red treatment of piles are beautifully described and illustrated.

Professor Goligher's text book was always excellent but this new edition can only be described as superb. There is a very full and well referenced description of every aspect of the diseases of the large bowel where different opinions are fairly presented. In each section the author clearly states his own opinion and advice, the weight of which depends not only on his vast clinical experience but also on the many trials which he has carefully conducted over the years.

This is a big book in every sense except its price which at £49.50 is really very reasonable. It is a "must" for all colorectal surgeons and general surgeons who operate in this area. Even those who already own a copy of an earlier edition should invest in this fifth edition. It is well and robustly bound, which is fortunate as the library and ward unit copies will be heavily thumbed.

TK

THE MODERN MANAGEMENT OF CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE. By John Hamer. (Pp 168. £8.50). London: Lloyd-Luke Ltd., 1982.

THE author in eight chapters brings the reader up-to-date on the modern view and management of patients with congestive heart failure. The first chapter looks at the physiology of congestive heart failure and the subsequent chapters examine the pharmacological actions and side-effects of the various drugs used in the treatment of congestive heart failure. The book does, however, suffer from a paucity of illustrations. It is easily readable, short and concise. It is well referenced and the majority of the references are up-to-date. It can be thoroughly recommended to both undergraduates and postgraduates in medicine.

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